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Weekly Candle Intentions/Memorials were offered last week by Tim Martin; Melanie Shuster; Viola Peifer; Kathy Schrmack; Lawrence Martin; Olga Radick; Eleanor Sanger; Joanne Nelson; Theresa Sharpless; Pani Brancho; Melanie Paieski; Cindy Pavilonis; Patty Watson

***"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* - John 8:12**

The Eternal Lamp was offered last week by John Gaydos, Sr., In Memory of Wife, Catherine; Cindy Pavilonis, In Memory of Grandpap George Huron; Theresa Sharpless, In Memory of Father, Nick Buhonick. May Their Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamjat!

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2017 NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE – Bishop Gregory asks each member of our Diocese to pray the Prayer for Peace every evening of the Nativity Fast, either as a family or individually. Cut out and use the prayer daily (that is found on the last page). Let us unite our prayers for peace on earth! A special webpage (<http://www.acrod.org/consecration/prayerchallenge>) has been set up where additional information on this year's prayer challenge, including a video message from Bishop Gregory (<https://youtu.be/VU0-hldOfIs>).

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#GivingTuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Celebrated **THIS Tuesday (11/28)** following

Thanksgiving after the widely recognized shopping events *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday*, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. Let's remember our Orthodox neighbors, such as the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), if you will be donating online. +++

Along this line, Orthodox Christian Fellowship's ("OCF") Student Leadership Board has a 2017 Giving Tuesday Challenge. They have set a very modest goal of \$10,000. If the 2017 Giving Tuesday Challenge raises \$20,000, Steven Laduzinsky, an OCF Board of Director, has agreed to personally match that amount on a dollar for dollar basis for a total of \$40,000! The 2017 Giving Tuesday Challenge is already open. Online donations must be made by November 28, 2017 at 11:59:59 PST and mailed donations (to Orthodox Christian Fellowship, Giving Tuesday Challenge, 50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02445) must be postmarked on or before November 28, 2017 to be credited to the matching challenge. Contributions can be made online at Donorbox.org/giving-tuesday-17. To follow OCF's Giving Tuesday progress on the 28th, you can follow them on FB, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat (@ocfministry). When making a donation please designate on your online or mailed in donation that the donation is for the Giving Tuesday Challenge.

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BEGIN SHOPPING

Our Stewardship Gift To God

Dues/Stewardship:	\$ 204
Candles/Small C./Eternal Lamp/C. box:	\$ 255
Envelopes: Sunday/Feast Day/Special:	\$ 494
Total Collections:	\$ 953
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 20
Collection for the Saints: "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper." 1 Cor 16:2	

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Mystery of Holy Confession – All are reminded that fasting from food goes hand-in-hand with fasting from sin. This is why the Church encourages us to receive the Mystery of Holy Confession during the Nativity Fast period. Confessions will be heard most Saturdays from 11a–1p. Other times are available by appointment! Please contact Father Dave to arrange a time. **A blessed Nativity Fast to all!**

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Exploring Orthodoxy Discussions –

We will meet on Wednesdays from 7:00p to about 8:15p thru Dec. 13th at Eat 'n Park (2650 Brandt School Road, Wexford, Pa 15090 / 724-940-3270). **### IF YOU WILL BE COMING THIS WED., 11/29, PLEASE LET FATHER KNOW BY LUNCHTIME ON WEDNESDAY! (We need an RSVP just for this week.) ###** We will continue our examination of *the priestly prayers of St John Chrysostom's Divine Liturgy*. We hope and pray that everyone is able to attend these tangent oriented discussions about Orthodoxy! Come for a bite to eat and learn about your faith! (If you need a ride, please contact Fr. Dave.)

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Nativity Clean Up – will be on Saturday, **December 9th** from 9am-noon. A "to-do list" is being put together...

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Christmas at FOCUS – We have offered to donate, as we did last year, 4 sheet cakes, 250 bottles of water, and napkins to FOCUS Pittsburgh for their annual Christmas Dinner for those in need. In addition, they are asking for \$25 gift cards from Target. Please see Kathy Schrmack if you are able to make a donation towards this wonderful event which will be held on **Saturday, December 16th**. Your prayers and support are greatly appreciated!

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Lots – O – Luck Calendars –

The National ACRY Lots-O-Luck Calendars are available. Only \$25 per ticket for a year's worth of prizes totaling \$10,000! Please see Theresa Sharpless for tickets.

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Bulletin Sponsor – Please contact Fr Dave or sign up in Vestibule to sponsor a bulletin *In Memory of* someone or *In Honor of* (anniversary, birthday, etc.). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is kindly requested.

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Visit Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddiocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
You Tube: youtube.com/acroddiocese

Coffee Social Steward Schedule

December 3: Open "Pot Luck"
December 10: Open "Pot Luck"
December 17: Open "Pot Luck"

Thank you to all those who support this critical ministry of our Church!

Coffee Social Stewards Needed – On weeks that no one signs up to host and organize our coffee social, we will have a 'pot-luck' meal. On these weeks, we ask that **every** household brings something **small** for a pot-luck surprise spread for the community to enjoy that week! (Don't over think the menu - Plan to *keep it simple* ☺) Everyone is also encouraged to help clean up after. *The Divine Liturgy concludes at the final blessing, but the liturgy continues downstairs as we gather in love and fellowship with our parish family and visiting neighbors.* Lets keep this critical ministry alive in our parish!

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Snow Removal Team – as temperatures have begun to drop, we are reminded that snow is on it's way. Just a reminder that we will be looking for folks, as in the past, to offer some of their time prior to people getting to church on Sundays to help with snow removal. *Please let Father know if you will be able to come earlier to Church to assist with keeping the sidewalks clear.* Ideally we will have a rotation of people so that the same person is not doing it each snowfall.

Parish Stewardship Opportunities...

- As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. (Luke 6:31)
- Take a Coffee Social week
- Attend an additional service at Church
- Plan to help with the *Nativity Clean-Up*
- Donate to the FOCUS Christmas Dinner

ORTHODOXY AROUND DA 'BURGH



Hosts Sing Alleluia: 'Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!' – The 10th Annual Nativity Concert of Orthodox Choirs from the Pittsburgh area to support the work of FOCUS Pittsburgh will be on **Sunday, December 10th** at 5:30pm at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Mt. Lebanon across from the Galleria Mall (123 Gilkeson Rd., Pittsburgh, Pa 15228). A free will offering will be taken. A reception will follow the concert at the church hall.

Orthodox Perspectives on the Reformation: A Symposium - will be held on **Saturday, December 16** at St Nicholas Orthodox Church (320 Munson Ave, McKees Rocks, PA) beginning with Divine Liturgy at 9am and the Symposium beginning at 10:30am. Five speakers (*Dr John Burgess, Dr Edith Humphrey, Archbishop Melchisedek (Pleska), Dr Kristie Mertz, and Andrew Weaver*) will present. Admission is free. Breakfast and lunch will be served. For more information, visit OrthodoxPittsburgh.org.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Source: www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar/orthodox-calendar © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos

Sainted John Chrysostom (Zlatoust), Archbishop of Constantinople

Commemorated on November 26/13

Sainted John Chrysostomos (Zlatoust), Archbishop of Constantinople, one of the Three OEcumenical Hierarchs [in English termed "Three Saints", Comm. 30 January], was born at Antioch in about the year 347 into the family of a military-commander. His father, Secundus, died soon after the birth of his son. His mother, Anthusa, widowed at twenty years of age, did not seek to remarry but rather devoted all her efforts to the raising of her son in the dictates of Christian piety. The youth studied under the finest philosophers and rhetoricians. But, scorning the vain disciplines of pagan knowledge, the future hierarch turned himself to the profound study of Holy Scripture and prayerful contemplation. Saint Meletios, Bishop of Antioch (Comm. 12 February), loved John like a son, guided him in the faith, and in the year 367 baptised him. After three years John was made a church-reader. Later on, when Saint Meletios had been sent off into exile by the emperor Valens in the year 372, John together with Theodore (afterwards bishop of Mopsuetia) studied under the experienced instructors of ascetic life, the presbyters Flavian and Diodor of Tarsis. The highly refined Diodor had especial influence upon the youth. When John's mother died, he accepted monasticism, which he called the "true philosophy".



Soon John and his friend Basil came to be regarded for the occupying of episcopal cathedra-chairs, and the friends decided to withdraw into the wilderness, fleeing assignment. But Saint John, himself evading the dignity of archbishop out of humility, secretly assisted in the consecration of Basil.

During this period Saint John wrote his "Six Discourses on the Priesthood", a great work of Orthodox pastoral theology. The saint spent four years in the toils of wilderness life, asceticising under the guidance of an experienced spiritual guide. And here he wrote three books entitled, "Against the Opponents of Those Attracted to the Monastic Life", and a collection entitled, "A Comparison of the Monk with the Emperor" (or, "Comparison of Imperial Power, Wealth and Eminence, with the True and Christian Wisdom-Loving Monastic Life"), – both works which are pervaded by a profound reflection of the worthiness of the monastic vocation. For two years the saint maintained complete silence, situated in a solitary cave. But to recover his health the saint was obliged to return to Antioch. In the year 381 the bishop of Antioch Saint Meletios ordained him deacon. The years following were devoted to work over new theological tomes: "Concerning Providence" ("To the Ascetic Stagirios"), "Book Concerning Virginity", "To a Young Widow" (2 discourses), and the "Book About Saint Babylos and Against Julian and the Pagans".

In the year 386 Saint John was ordained presbyter by the bishop of Antioch, Flavian. They imposed upon him the duty to preach the Word of God. Saint John was a splendid preacher, and for his rare talent with God-inspired words he received from his flock the title – the "Golden-Tongued" (Grk. "Chrysostomos", Slav. "Zlatoust"). For 12 years the saint preached in church amidst a crowded throng of people, deeply stirring the hearts of his listeners, usually twice a week, but sometimes daily.

In his pastoral zeal to provide Christians a rather better comprehension of Holy Scripture, Saint John made recourse to sacred-textual hermeneutics – the discipline of commentary explanation of the Word of God (i.e. exegesis"). Among his exegetical works are commentaries on entire books of the Holy Scripture (Genesis, the Psalter, the Gospels of Matthew and John, the Epistles of the Apostle Paul), and also many an homily on individual texts of the Holy Bible, but likewise instructions on the Feasts, laudations on the Saints, and also apologetic (i.e. defensive) homilies (against Anomoeans, Judaizers and pagans). Saint John as presbyter zealously fulfilled the command of caring for the needy: under him the Antioch Church each day provided sustenance to as many as 3,000 virgins and widows, not including in this number the shut-ins, wanderers and the sick.

At the beginning of Great Lent in 388 the saint began his commentary on the Book of Genesis. Over the forty-day period he preached 32 homilies. During Passion week he spoke about the Betrayal and about the Cross, and during the Paschal Bright Week his parishioners were daily instructed by his pastoral discourse. His exegesis on the Book of Genesis was concluded only at the end of October (388). With Pascha in the following year the saint began his examination of the Gospel of John, and towards the end of the year 389 he switched over to the Gospel of Matthew. In the year 391 the Antioch Christians listened to his commentary on the Epistles of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans and to the Corinthians. In 393 he addressed the Epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, Timothy, Titus and the Psalms. In his homily on the Epistle to the Ephesians, Saint John denounced an Antioch schism: "I tell ye and I witness before ye, that to tear asunder the Church means nothing less, than to fall into heresy. The Church is the house of the Heavenly Father, One Body and One Spirit".

The fame of the holy preacher grew, and in the year 397 with the demise of the Constantinople archbishop Nektarios – successor to Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint John Chrysostom was summoned from Antioch for placement upon the Constantinople cathedra-seat. At the capital, the holy archpastor was not able to preach as often as he had at Antioch. Many matters awaited resolving by the saint, and he began with the most important – with the spiritual perfection of the priesthood. And in this he himself was the best example. The financial means apportioned for the archbishop were channelled by the saint into the upkeep of several hospices for the sick and two hostels for pilgrims. The archpastor sufficed on scant food, and he refused invitations to meals. The zeal of the saint in affirming the Christian faith spread not only to the inhabitants of Constantinople, but also to Thrace – to include Slavs and Goths, and to Asia Minor and the Pontine region. He established a bishop for the Bosphorus Church, situated in the Crimea. Saint John sent off zealous missionaries to Phoenicia, to Persia, and to

the Skyths, to convert pagans to Christ. He also wrote missives to Syria to bring back the Marcionites into the Church, and he accomplished this. Preserving the oneness of the Church, the saint would not permit a powerful Gothic military-commander, who was dictating terms to the emperor, to open an Arian church at Constantinople. The saint exerted much effort in the arranging of august Divine-services: he compiled a Liturgy, he introduced antiphonal singing for the all-night vigil, and he wrote several prayers for the sacramental rite of anointing the sick with oil. The dissolute morals of people in the capital, especially at the imperial court, found in the person of the saintly hierarch its denunciation, irrespective of person. When the empress Eudoxia connived at the confiscation of the last properties of the widow and children of a disgraced dignitary, the saint rose to their defense. The arrogant empress did not concede and nursed a grudge against the archpastor. The hatred of Eudoxia against the saint blazed forth anew, when malefactors told her, that apparently the saint had her particularly in mind in his instruction on women of vanity. A trial-court was convened composed of hierarchs, which earlier had been justly condemned by Chrysostom: Theophilus of Alexandria, the Gabala bishop Severian, who shortly before had been banished from the capital because of improprieties, and others. This court of judgement declared Saint John deposed, and for his insult to the empress to be subject to execution. The emperor substituted exile for execution. At the church surged an angry crowd, resolved to defend their pastor. The saint, in order to avoid a riot, gave himself over into the hands of the authorities. That very night at Constantinople there occurred an earthquake. The court was ashudder. The terrified Eudoxia urgently besought the emperor to bring back the saint and promptly dispatched a letter to the banished pastor, beseeching him to return. And anew, in the capital church, the saint in a short talk praised the Lord, "For All His Ways". The slanderers fled to Alexandria. But already after a mere two months a new denunciation provoked the wrath of Eudoxia. In March of the year 404 there gathered an unjust Council, decreeing the exile of Saint John. Upon his removal from the capital, a conflagration reduced to ashes the temple of Saint Sophia and the Senate edifice. Devastating barbarian incursions soon followed, and in October 404 Eudoxia died. Even pagans saw in these events Heavenly chastisement for the unjust judgement rendered against the saint of God.

Situated in Armenia, the saint strove all the more to encourage his spiritual children. In numerous letters (245 are preserved) to bishops in Asia, Africa, Europe and particularly to his friends in Constantinople, Saint John consoled the suffering, guiding and giving support to his followers. In the Winter of 406 Saint John was confined to his bed with sickness. But his enemies were not to be appeased. From the capital came orders to transfer Saint John to desolate Pitius (in Abkhazia). Worn out by sickness, under accompanying military escort for three months in the rain and frost, the saint made his final transferral, – at Comana his powers failed him. At the crypt of Saint Basiliskos (Comm. 22 May), comforted by a vision of the martyr ("Despair not, brother John! Tomorrow we shalt be together"), and having communed the Holy Mysteries, the oecumenical hierarch with the words, "Glory to God for everything!", expired to the Lord on 14 September 407. The holy relics of Saint John

Chrysostom were solemnly transferred to Constantinople in the year 438. The student of Saint John, the Monk Isidor Pelusiot (Comm. 4 February), wrote: "The house of David is grown strong, and the house of Saul enfeebled: he is

victor over the storms of life, and is entered into Heavenly repose". The memory of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated by Holy Church on 27 and 30 January and 13 November.

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LIVING ORTHODOXY

As We Begin the Nativity Fast

<http://myocn.net/as-we-begin-the-nativity-fast/>

Go-To Verses of the Bible

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said "Let there be light"; and there was light. Genesis 1:1-3

Unlike our American culture which celebrates from now until Christmas, with celebrations ending promptly on December 26, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Nativity throughout the year. Our joyful part of the celebration in this season is supposed to be from January 7-20. November 28-January 6 is a period of fasting and reflective preparation. The focus is neither shopping nor decorating, but meditating on the awesome miracle of the Son of God taking on flesh and becoming one of us. This is why we call the holiday either the Nativity (to commemorate an historical event) or the Incarnation (to recognize the spiritual significance of the Nativity). Each day of the 40 days will examine the scriptures of the Nativity. My hope is that we'll take this journey together in a prayerful and purposeful way.

Today's "prologue" is a summary of what led up to the feast of the Nativity. **Why did God send His Son to be among us?** To answer this question, we go back to "the beginning."

In order to believe in God, one has to first believe that God created us - someone greater than us created us. Whether one interprets Genesis 1 as seven literal days or not (most Orthodox theologians affirm that the seven day creation is an allegory), or whether one believes that God created everything, or that He created the first thing and a chain-reaction of evolutionary outgrowth was the result, the most important verses of Genesis 1 are the first three: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. In the beginning, there was God, there was nothing else but God. And God created everything from nothing. God, however, is not created, but existed from the beginning.

In order to believe in Christ, one has to believe that He, too, existed from the beginning. Genesis 1:1-3 reveals all three persons of the Holy Trinity, present and working together for the creation of the world. In the beginning God (the Father) created the heavens and the earth. The Spirit (Holy Spirit) of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said (the voice of God is God the Son) "Let there be light."

After the creation of the Light, God (in Trinity) created the heavens, the earth, the moon, sun and stars, the plants, and the animals. At every stage of the creation, God looked upon what He

created "and saw that it was good [beautiful]." (Genesis 1: 4, 12, 18, 25)

On the "sixth day", God said "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. . . So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:26-27) And after creating the man, God looked on what He created and saw that it was VERY good, the only time that this superlative is used in reference to the creation.

God gave man the Garden of Eden, where he lived in a state of Paradise. However, God gave the man free will. He did not force man to live in union with God. He gave him a choice. He told man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." (Genesis 2: 16)

But man was not content. Instead of feeling thankfulness for all that God had given to him, man was ungrateful. And tempted to eat from the tree, he did so. And God cast mankind out of Paradise, out from the Garden of Eden. Instead of living in unity with God, the human being now lived in a state of chaos-victim of his own mistakes, victim of the mistakes of others, and victim of a broken creation filled with "natural" (in reality unnatural, because God made nature perfect) disasters, until the day that each human being dies, and returns to the dust from which he was created.

A "wall of separation" separated man from God. In Gen. 3:24, we read "God drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life."

God did not abandon His people though. He made a covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:13-17) that He would never destroy the earth with a flood again. He made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15) that God would be a Father to Abraham and all of His descendants. The sign of the covenant was circumcision (Genesis 17). God gave deliverance from famine through Joseph (Genesis 41). He gave deliverance to His people, the Israelites, from the oppression of Pharaoh (Exodus 14). God gave order to the people of Israel through the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). He gave His people judges, kings and prophets in every generation, to let them know that they were not forgotten by Him. Throughout the Old Testament, there are prophecies foretelling of the coming of Christ, the Messiah, who will save His people from their sins. "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son," (Galatians 4:4), "to redeem those under the Law." And this is the Feast of the Nativity. The story of the Nativity is told in



As we begin our journey, remember these three things-God made us in His image and likeness. We fell through sin. Through the Incarnation (which begins the earthly ministry of Christ that culminates in His Passion and Resurrection from the dead), we are reunited with Christ, as the Creator comes to live among His creation and redeem us from our sins.

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, as we tell about this mystery. The middle wall of separation has

May God bless us as we take this journey together!

Today's reflection is from the book "Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections on Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany" by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis.

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Church Funerals – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and financial obligations; otherwise burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

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PRAYER CORNER

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions and Other Needs *

A Prayer For The Sick: O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant name. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver him/her from sickness and bitter pain. Heal him/her so that he/she may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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For the Health of... Mildred, Anna Mae, Julie, Jane, Eleanor D., Mark, Viola, Juliana, Nathaniel, Katie, Kenneth, Michael, Teresa, Roberta, Fr Shuster, Thomas, Fredrick, Helen B., Wendy, Gary, Barbara, Matthew, Patricia, Denise, Lino, John, Fr. Jonathan Tobias, Pañi Marsha Tobias, Cynthia, Mary ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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For the Special Intentions of... *those working towards our Community Outreach*, Christ the Savior Seminary, for Bishop Gregory, Stephen, David, Joshua, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Ameer, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Olga, John, Sarah, Sharon, Ryan, Cora, John S., *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Matthew, John, Timothy, Patricia, Theresa, Lawrence, Donald, Jane, Cynthia, Katherine, Eleanor, Kenneth, Gina, Robert, Jillian, Wendy, Olga, John, Melanie, Michael, John, Richard, John, Margaret, Sarah, Patricia ...*through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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Birthday Prayers for... Stephen Brancho (11/26), John Gaydos Sr. (11/26), John Righetti (11/26), Pañi Peggy Teklinski (11/26), Pañi Ileana Bennett (11/28), Chi-Wing Chow (11/29), Liam Kovats (11/30), Matthew Hanchulak (12/1), Stacy Dزامبو (12/1), Joshua Winkler (12/1), *Father's Godson*, Joseph Sekerak (12/2) ...*May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!*

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For those preparing for Marriage... ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia & all Holy Martyrs.*

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Anniversary Prayers for... Dustin & Lindsay (Winkler) Kovats (11/30/13) ...*May God fill them with His grace that they may continue to live in unity with Him!*

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For Expectant Mothers... Pañi Ileana, Ameer, Ashley, Katie, Harmonie ...*through the prayers of St Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, & St Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities... ...*through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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For our Catechumens & Inquirers... ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. John Maximovitch.*

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For the souls of the newly departed... ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. Memory eternal!*

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* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you would wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another**. Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. This prayer list is NOT limited to Orthodox Christians.

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY FAST:



2017 NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE

*Bishop Gregory asks each member of our Diocese to pray this **Prayer for Peace** every evening of the Nativity Fast, either as a family or individually.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Word of God, You became flesh and dwelt among us. You made the womb of Your most-pure Mother more spacious than the heavens. Yet You, the true light, were born in the darkness of a cave, thereby enlightening the world that was darkened by sin. To redeem us, You shared Your whole life. You submitted to death on the Cross and rose from the dead, bestowing life. We share in Your death and resurrection, that we may indeed be dead to sin and alive in You. As we fast and prepare to celebrate Your life-giving manifestation, we pray especially that our respect for life will prevail in the world. Directed by Your command to care for “the least of these,” may we and all people heed Your call to show care and concern for life in the womb; for the lives of the poor, oppressed, and suffering; and for the lives of the sick, the elderly, and the dying. May Your peace reign in our hearts and throughout world, especially in places of unrest, so that the shedding of blood in warfare, violence, terrorism, tyranny, and all manner of strife may come to an end. May aggression between neighbors and nations fade away. May love reign in the lives of families. O Savior, You have said “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” May we become partakers of Your abundant life, together with all the saints whose lives have pleased You from the beginning. For You are the way, the truth and the life, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your most-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. AMEN.

